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## **Professionals Become Certified Teachers Through Alternative Program**

*Jun-21-2005*

Professionals from throughout Illinois recently became certified school teachers through the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification program at Eastern Illinois University.

The program, now starting its third year, provides Illinois teaching credentials to those who have bachelor's degrees in certain subject areas and at least five years of related employment experience.

"This program is all about equipping individuals who already possess academic knowledge and work experience with the ability to teach," said Jim Kestner, coordinator of the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification program.

The program's candidates were honored for completing all requirements during a ceremony on Tuesday, June 14, in Buzzard Auditorium on the EIU campus. EIU President Lou Hencken was among the speakers.

Twenty-two candidates completed the program: William Frank Andersen Jr. of Rockford, mathematics; Colleen Belcher of Jacksonville, business education; John Bergin of Ramsey, technology education; Meredith Brown of Flossmoor, mathematics; Lori Clark of Champaign, science; Rebecca Dekker of Mt. Vernon, family and consumer sciences education; Richard F. Geiger Jr. of Champaign, science; Jennifer Greicius of Champaign, foreign languages; Dee Honn of Arthur, mathematics; David Jamieson of Winnetka, foreign languages; John Kugler of Chicago, technology education; Katherine Lapetina of Palatine, family and consumer sciences education; Amy Lutes of Hampshire, business education; Phillip Moore of Chicago, mathematics; Chad Olson of Marengo, business education; Connie Perez of Elgin, family and consumer sciences education; Matthew Poston of Effingham, science; Donja Rich of Oconee, science; Lynn Smith of Salem, business education; Christopher Steinkrauss of Chicago, business education; James Walker of Mattoon, foreign languages; and Raymond Walsh of West Chicago, business education.

Participants taught in Arlington Heights, Arthur, Atwood-Hammond, Champaign, Chicago, Des Plaines, Effingham, Freeport, Hume-Shiloh, Jacksonville, Kincaid, Madison, Marengo, Ramsey, Rantoul, Richmond-Burton and West Chicago.

"Ranging from their 20s to their 50s, these men and women have come to us because they want to make a difference in the lives of young people," Kestner said. "I've worked with them as their program coordinator, as well as their teacher and mentor, and I can attest to the fact that they are making a positive impact on the Illinois educational landscape."

Since it began in summer 2003, the program, which is part of EIU's College of Education and Professional Studies, has now awarded teaching certification to 35 candidates from throughout Illinois.

"Collectively, our candidates have already taught some 2,000 students in more than 30 schools," Kestner said. "Many have already distinguished themselves as outstanding teachers in their schools."

Twenty-five candidates are currently enrolled in the program, pursuing 2006 certification. The program is now accepting applications for the 2006-2007 session, which will begin in May.

Candidates must complete a Web-based course, an eight-week summer program, an internship as a paid teacher for one academic year and a two-week follow-up assessment.

To enroll, a candidate must hold a bachelor's degree, have five years of work experience and pass mandatory state tests by April 2006.

More details about the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification program are available online at [www.eiu.edu/~eiuttp](http://www.eiu.edu/~eiuttp).

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